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LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS

WESTON





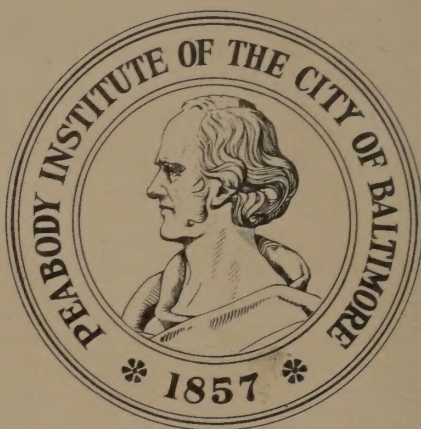


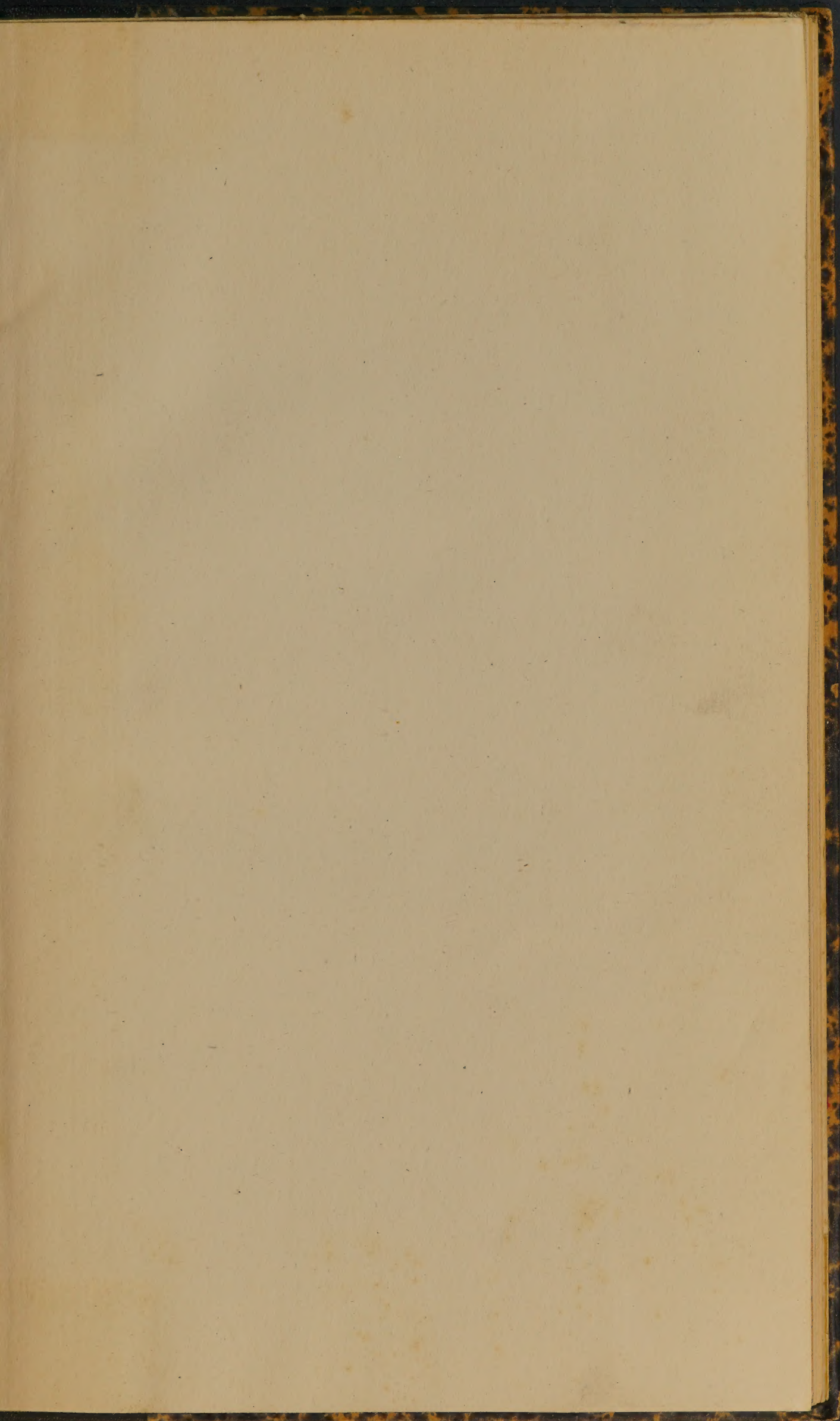
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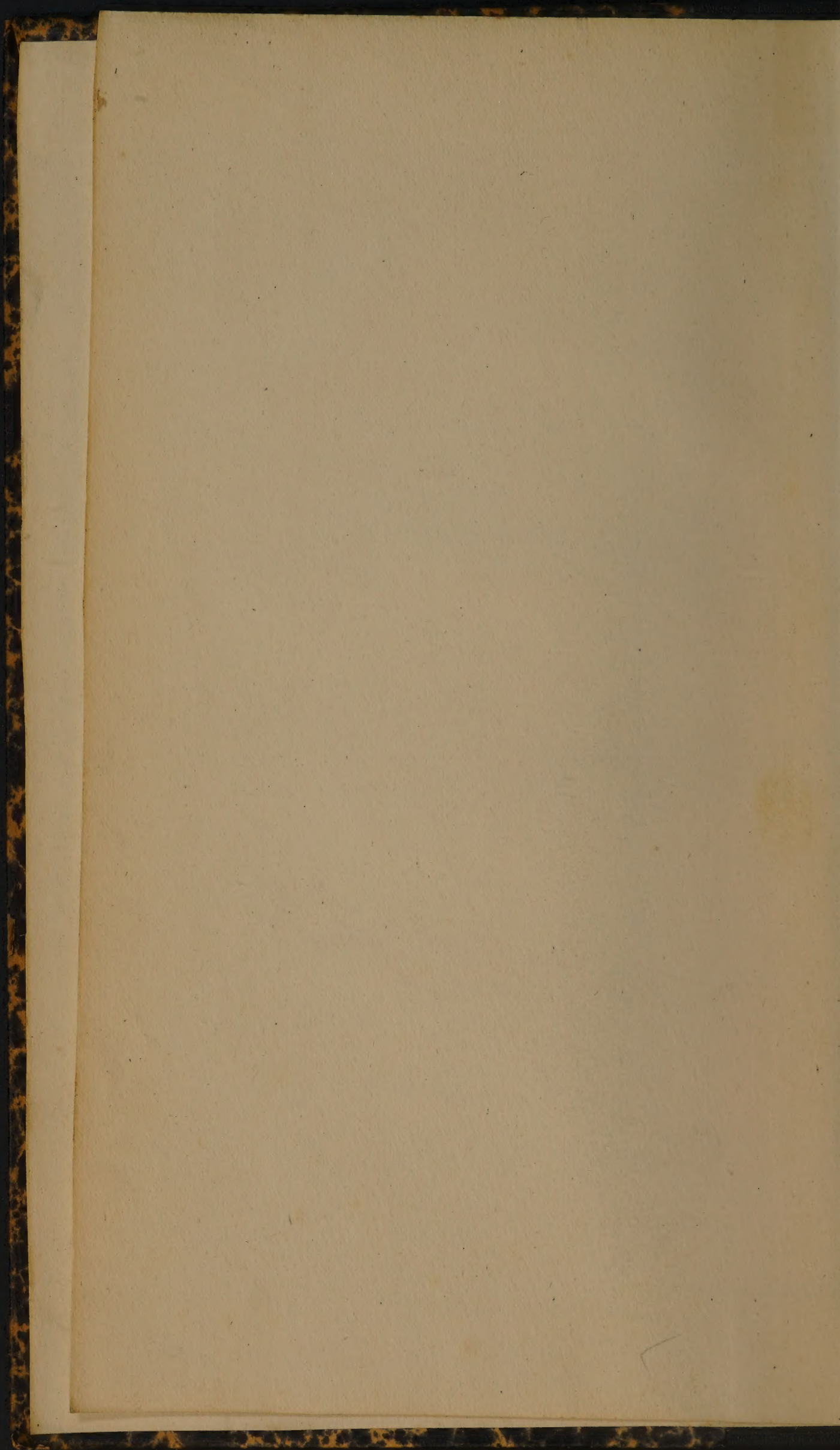
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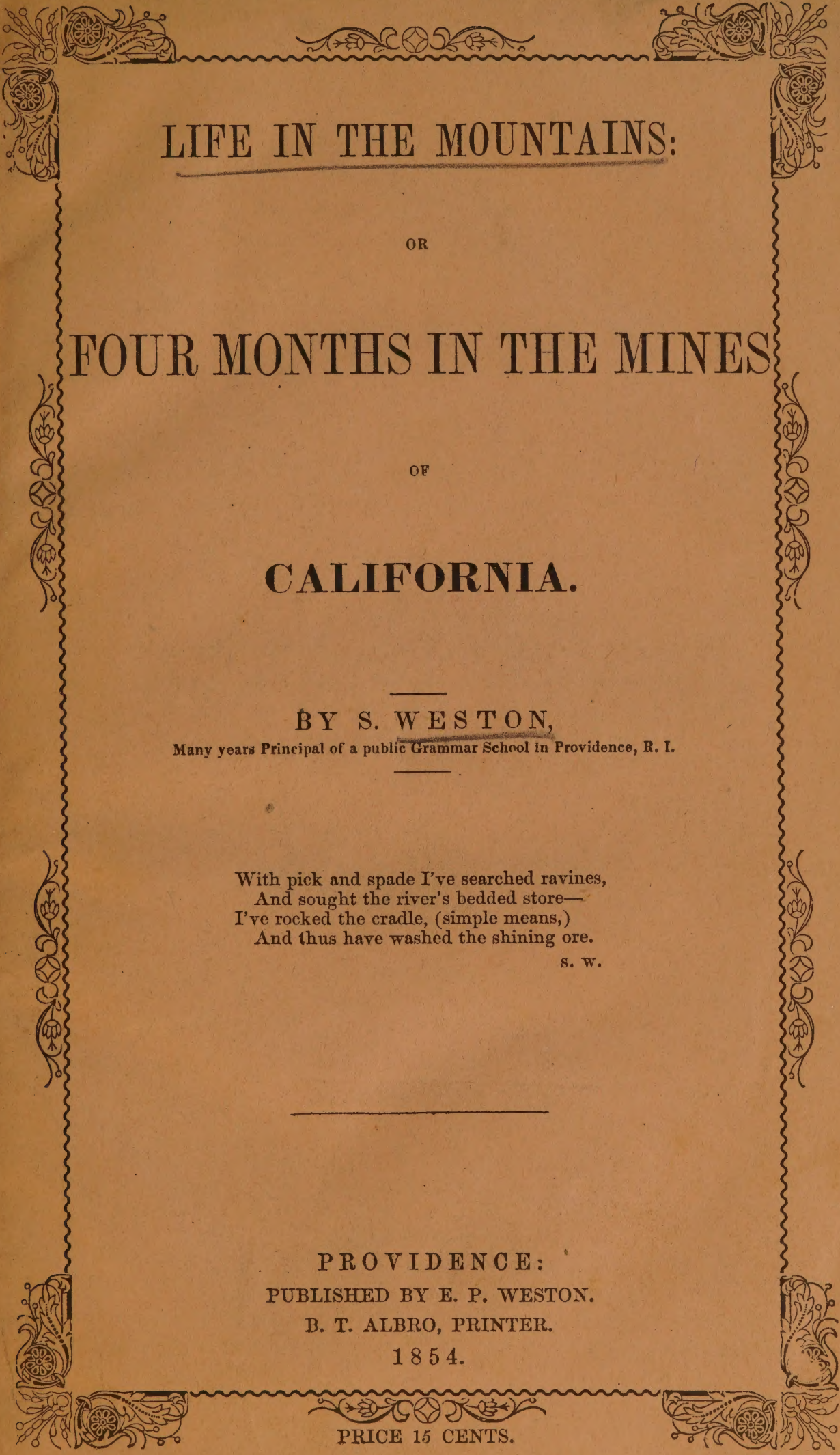
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LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS:

OR

FOUR MONTHS IN THE MINES

OF

CALIFORNIA.

—
BY S. WESTON,

Many years Principal of a public Grammar School in Providence, R. I.
—

With pick and spade I've searched ravines,
And sought the river's bedded store—
I've rocked the cradle, (simple means,)
And thus have washed the shining ore.

S. W.

—
PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY E. P. WESTON.

B. T. ALBRO, PRINTER.

1854.

PRICE 15 CENTS.

Winton, Silas,

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NOTE.

The following pages were written during the Author's late sojourn in the mountains of California. He was an eye-witness of the facts narrated, and recorded them at the time of their occurrence.

PROVIDENCE, Jan. 1, 1854.

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FOUR MONTHS IN THE MINES.

DEPARTURE FOR THE MINES.

This morning, April 10th, eleven companions and myself decided to visit first the Auburn mines, which are situated forty-five miles northeast of Sacramento, and about two hundred in the same direction from San Francisco. Accordingly, after making arrangements with two teamsters to transport our mining tools, provisions, and other baggage, we took our departure from Sacramento City little past noon.

The sun shone brightly, and the fanning of the soft cooling breeze was delightful. The earth was dressed with verdure, and everything above and around seemed to contribute to make pleasant the journey. But as we left the city and launched into the wilderness, our hearts throbbed somewhat with loneliness.

Soon however, the many new and exciting scenes witnessed, diverted our minds from ourselves and each countenance beamed with cheerfulness—the spirit of merriment was rife among us, and our pranks and capers resembled very much those of a group of children when just let loose from school. Each apparently endeavored to outvie his fellows in leaping over stumps, logs, clumps of bushes, ditches, &c.

The portion of country this afternoon passed is flat and contains many small rivers, sloughs, and low places which the recent rains have much swollen, the fording of which in some instances we found no little difficulty. But this obstacle was made only an occasion of amusement by the frolicsome ones. As we reached these streams and pools each ascertained the

best fordable point, displaced his shoes and stockings and once or twice pants also, then hastened splash-dash through the water.

Humorous Scene.—On one occasion as we came to a small river too deep to be waded in safety, the writer sprang upon the hindmost part of one of the baggage wagons, which was drawn by eight oxen, just as the fore wheels were entering the water. The body of the wagon was so filled with baggage that he had only room to catch his feet upon its extreme end while with both hands he held fast to the frame of the covering. While descending the bank he found no trouble in keeping his position in harmony with the laws of gravitation; but when the forward wheels began to ascend the opposite bank, which was quite steep, in spite of him his position at once became reversed, consequently at war with the gravitating force which of course settled his body back doubled as far as the length of his arms would permit.

The situation of things brought most of the baggage as well as the weight of the writer to bear so heavily upon the hind wheels that they sank deep in the mire, which not only immersed that portion of the wagon under the water, but stopped the team, and all the urging of the teamster with whip and voice could not start it again. This placed the writer in an unpleasant predicament—there he hung seated upon the water doing what he could to keep himself from sinking lower, while the teamster was endeavoring with all his might to urge his beasts to haul him out.

The state of things at once attracted the attention of the whole company, each of whom instead of sympathising with their unfortunate companion loudly shouted:

“Ha! ha! ha! see! see! Mr. W——n has set an eight ox team! ha! ha! friend W——n has stuck four pair of oxen!”

But the drama of the affair had not yet reached its crisis. The dilemma of the writer became more and more critical, for his strength began to wane. At length he gave up all hopes of being drawn out by the team, and endeavored to haul himself up so as to clamber over the wheels and get on shore. But the frame that canopied the wagon which his hands grasped, being old and rickety, suddenly gave way in part, when

the poor fellow thought his kettle of fish was upset sure enough, which caused renewed merriment—all were convulsed with laughter.

Soon however, the writer succeeded in drawing himself up, climbing over the wheels and reached the opposite side in safety. Shortly after, the teamster borrowed two pair of oxen, joined them to his own, hauled out his load, when all passed on again.

Auburn, April 13th. *First Night's Encampment.*—Our journey from Sacramento City to this place, occupied little less than three days. With the exception of a few places where we had to cross the water, and one hill quite steep, the road is very good, but the accommodations are meagre enough.—There are four or five shanties, two of which are large round tents that are located near the best places for grass and water; but our teamsters paid but little attention to them—they have stopping places of their own selection, at which they occasionally stopped for their beasts to rest and graze.

When the first night overtook us, we encamped under the branches of a large tree, a short distance from one of the shanties. Each traveler was obliged to cook his own supper.—This was a hard case,—entirely new business to most of us, but we had to do it or go with empty stomachs. But to cook a regular supper was impossible, so the writer concluded to make a sort of milk gruel, and with a little hard bread to make it answer for a night's meal. So he purchased at the shanty a pint of milk for which he paid three bits (37 1-2 cents), and soon after commenced the trial of his skill in the art of cookery.

He made a fire against the tree, around which at different points two others had been made by our teamsters, over which they were busily cooking their suppers, and placed on it a skillet of water. Soon it boiled, when he stirred in a little indian meal, some salt, and poured in a portion of the milk. In a short time it was deemed sufficiently cooked; but just as the writer began to put himself in motion to remove it, the burned sticks separated and over went his porridge into the fire nearly extinguishing it. Instead of being thrown into a fretful humor by the mishap, he calmly considered that one branch of the art of cookery consisted in knowing how to prevent such

accidents; so he immediately remade the fire and had better success on the second trial.

By this time most of the company were making preparations to lodge for the night. Some pitched their tents, in which they took shelter, while others spread their blankets upon the ground and slept in the open air. The writer spread his blankets under one of the baggage wagons, but soon finding the ground quite damp, refolded them and went to the above mentioned shanty, where he obtained the privilege of sleeping during the night upon a bench, and had a comfortable night's rest.

While passing on our way, we saw many wild animals that from time to time would start up before us. In some places a great variety of the feathered songsters were nimbly hopping among the branches of trees, or briskly flying from place to place. But we cannot speak very favorably in regard to the melody of their music, though the plumage of some was exquisitely beautiful.

We saw several rabbits, large hares, also some deer and occasionally a rattlesnake. On one occasion we suddenly came upon a deer having four or five fawns about one third grown—they were behind a little rise of ground on which was a thick cluster of bushes, and as they heard or beheld us, scampered away with a fleetness that astonished us.

First View of the Mines. — We arrived at this place about eleven o'clock this forenoon and were not a little surprised when we first beheld the "diggings," as they are familiarly called, for the earth in almost every direction appeared as if it had been rent asunder by an earthquake.

After dinner we selected places for our tents, and at once drove down the stakes and reared them. The remainder of the afternoon our little party spent in rambling around among the miners to learn something in regard to their modes of operation, and need not say were much amused as we witnessed the washing process and saw the shining ore.

The precious metal is separated from the dirt by a very simple process. In a small way it is done by a *tin pan*, into which the dirt is placed with about the same quantity of water, which

by a steady rolling motion of the vessel is kept in a state of solution until the gold all sinks to the bottom, which it very soon does, it being so much the heaviest; when the top is poured off and the shining ore is secured.

But the valuable metal is much faster obtained by a *cradle* which is generally used by the miners, which in size and shape very much resembles that in the family nursery. In the head is tightly fitted two aprons made of thin boards about eighteen inches in length, and fourteen in width, one above the other, the one at the bottom pitching towards the head, and the other in an opposite direction. On the top over the aprons, is a sieve into which the dirt is placed by one person while another constantly rocks the cradle a little faster than a mother does her child, at the same time supplying it with water. The motion of the cradle thus keeps the dirt in a state of solution while passing over the aprons and escaping through an opening at the foot of them and passing off through an aperture at the foot of the cradle. Across the aprons and at the bottom of the cradle, two narrow strips are nailed to catch the gold which always sinks to the bottom.

We soon felt that the mining business was very exciting, as we mingled with the miners and noticed their constant anxiety to obtain their "pile." As each sank his mattock or shovel in the ground and hauled it up he looked sharp as if expecting to find large lumps of the yellow ore. The writer saw a person pick up a piece worth about six dollars which rolled from his shovel as he hauled up the earth, and noticed the effect his success produced in his countenance—he did not look very ill-natured as he placed the shining ore in his purse.

May 6th. *Grizzly Bears and Indians.*—Amid the excitements of Auburn and its adjacent country, we have labored during the past three weeks. With a becoming industry we have plied our hands and hope not to be considered egotistical in saying we imagine we have become an adept in the art of mining—that we can rock the cradle not only gracefully, but scientifically. Our success however, has been inconsiderable, having obtained only from three to eight dollars value per day.

The excitement alluded to, rises mainly from the fear of encountering grizzly bears and the Indians, many of which infest this region of the country. A few weeks since, as we have been informed, a large bear of this species leisurely passed through the south part of the village to the no small amazement of the people. A few days since another was killed only a short distance from us, which was a very large and powerful beast, weighing more than eleven hundred pounds. When disabled so it could not walk, it would bound about, tearing up the ground, bushes and small trees with a strength that filled with astonishment those who captured it.

The bear is not at all timid, but it is said seldom attacks any person, unless when provoked to do so in self-defence, or when very hungry. It, however, never engages in draw-battles,—but when attacked even but lightly, by man or beast, a terrible conflict is sure to at once ensue, when the victory soon terminates in its favor.

The Indians for a few days past have been very troublesome. Some miles distant from Auburn, the miners have had several skirmishes with them, and it is reported have killed two or three, which has inspired them with feelings of revenge. They sometimes kill or steal mules and oxen belonging to teamsters and others, generally making their onsets at midnight, and of late, in some instances have attempted to take the life of their white neighbors. We are kept in constant fear, especially nights, lest the red man should pierce us with arrows, which are usually sharply pointed with glass or stone; or with uplifted tomahawk and drawn scalping knife make a precipitate descent, such as is known only in Indian warfare, upon and destroy us.

About six miles below this place, four nights since, an Indian shot an arrow into a mule that was near its owner's tent, which pierced through the heart, the point coming out on the opposite side. On the same night and near the same place, Mr. C——, a gentleman who came to this country in company with the writer, supposes an attack would have been made on him, had not the growling and barking of his large, faithful dog caused the enemy to desist.

One day last week a teamster being alone, was attacked by several of these sons of the forest, even at mid-day, about mid-way between this village and a place eight miles distant, called Kelly's Bar. The stealthy foes concealed themselves behind some large trees, where they waited until he came up, when a volley of arrows were showered upon him, three of which took effect, one in his head, another in his shoulder, and the third in his thigh, which brought him almost senseless to the ground. They at once attempted to rob him, but just then some travelers came in sight, who frightened them away. It was feared at first that the wound upon his head would prove mortal, but the writer learned this morning that it is thought he will recover.

The revengeful annoyers night before last visited our neighborhood. Little past twelve, one was seen slyly approaching the third tent from my own by one of its occupants who happened to be up. As soon as he had made the discovery, he roused from sleep two other fellow lodgers, seized his revolvers and a well loaded rifle, dashed out, and fired upon the enemy. In a moment his two comrades, armed with their rifles and revolvers, joined him, when a spirited chase commenced. The Indian retreated towards the woods with the fleetness of a deer with his long black hair streaming behind, while the Yankees with nothing on but their shirts, were scouring after him as fast as their legs could carry them, yelling and firing as they ran. They pursued him until he entered the woods, where two others joined him, when they returned.

The moon had set but the stars were brightly shining and the scene presented was a novel as well as an exciting one. In a short time nearly the whole people of the village were under arms, and left in small parties for different points, determined to exterminate the merciless foes, or drive them far from us; they have returned however, without being able to find their whereabouts.

Visit to Kelly's Bar, and Awful Slaughter of the Indians.— Having been informed that the mines at Kelly's Bar, on the American river, were more profitable than those at this place, this morning soon after breakfast, a friend and myself started to

go and examine them. Being obliged to pass along the road where the Indians had attacked the teamster, whose case we have mentioned, we felt the excursion would be rather hazardous, so we armed ourselves, which was the only time the writer has done so since leaving home. It is well known among the miners, that the Indians are exceedingly afraid of the rifle, of which we took advantage and each carried one on his shoulder, my friend also wore in his belt, two six barreled revolvers.—Our hearts palpitated faster than usual as may well be supposed, as from time to time we anxiously cast our eyes behind the trees, clusters of bushes and hillocks, while passing along, not knowing but the savages would suddenly attack us as they had done others.

Before reaching the river, we had heard several times from persons we met, that the place of the tribe's concealment had been accidentally discovered in a by-place, a day or two previous, only about five miles distant from Kelly's Bar, and that the miners from that place, had decided to surprise them at an early hour this morning, and to give them a chastisement they would not soon forget.

Kelly's Bar is a small village composed almost entirely of tents, and situated on the main road where it crosses the middle fork of the American river. After our arrival, we soon learned the facts concerning the expedition that had been fitted out against the Indians—it consisted of twenty-two young men, all well armed each with a bowie knife, a short-gun and a pair of six barreled revolving pistols, so that the company could fire more than one hundred and twenty times without stopping to reload.

At early dawn the resolute company started on this destructive errand, ten of them on mules and the remaining twelve on foot. Poor Indians! little did they dream this morning, as the sun arose and greeted them, of the awful storm that was about to burst upon them! The miners generally suspended their usual labor this morning, and we found them anxiously waiting to learn the result of the expedition.

At length while my friend, several others and myself were sitting in a store conversing upon the absorbing topic of the morn-

ing, three of the party returned and entered the store. As they came in, each held in his hand trophies of victory, consisting of a small bundle of bows and arrows, from the ends of which hung dangling down, two or three scalps.

The young men gave an account of the engagement, from which it appears that the Indians occupied a ravine in the midst of the woods, rendered by nature very retired, being overlooked by several hills. Little past sunrise, the party reached and ascended one of the hills, behind which, was the enemy; and when near the top halted, when all examined their arms, putting them in complete order. Soon they passed over and dashed down the hill-side until within proper distance, when they hurriedly commenced the work of destruction.

At the time, the Indians were at their morning meal, but were alarmed by one of their number discovering the "pale faces" as soon as they came over the hill, while getting water from a brook a short distance from their rude dwellings. In a moment all the males, strong enough to wield the bow and arrow, instantly snatched them up, arranged themselves a short distance in front of their enclosure, which was surrounded by palisades, or a sort of wickerwork fence, and hurled showers of arrows at their assailants: so nimbly did they use their bows, that often each had two arrows on the way at the same time, while our men were pouring upon them a most deadly fire.

But the contest was unequal—the poor red man had no chance for effectual resistance—the balls cut down many of them, while the distance prevented most of their arrows from reaching our men. Unfortunately, during the engagement, their women and children were in the rear, consequently some were killed and several wounded—their shrieks and groans were heard by our men as the balls struck them.

The battle lasted about thirty minutes, during which time the Indians displayed great courage and did not yield, though death stared them full in the face, until their chief had fallen, when they ceased firing, and retreated up the hill on the opposite side of the ravine. Our men pursued them a short distance and shot several, causing them to fall backwards down the hill. Then with their bowie knives they passed round among the

wounded and the slain, and where life had not become extinct they extinguished it! But I forbear: what followed is too revolting for any but a savage mind to contemplate.

The women and children plead hard for their lives, but the young men did not wish to harm them more—two of the younger women offered to accompany them on their return, if they would spare their lives. This appeal excited their pity somewhat, and they made them understand that they would not harm them.

During the engagement, about thirty of the Indians were killed, and nearly as many others wounded, while only two of the whites were injured, and they but slightly. I am happy to say that the miners very generally disapprove of the conduct of the young victors, especially those acts of cruelty perpetrated upon the wounded after the enemy had fled. But of late the Indians have committed so many depredations, that the miners have become strongly incensed against them, and hence it is unsafe to say much against the uncivilized treatment they received this morning.

Myself and friend spent little more than three hours in "prospecting" as it is called, at Kelly's Bar, but found its mines yielded no more than those at Auburn. At four we left the place and passed homewards.

Origin of Indian Troubles Explained,—the Undaunted Backwoodsman.—On the way we stopped at a public house called the "Missouri House," where we found the afore-named wounded teamster, who though suffering with extreme pain, we learned it is thought will recover. While at this house we became more acquainted with the origin of most, if not all the difficulty the miners have had with the aborigines of the country. Of late, we have several times heard rumors of the same import, but while here, we learned the facts from an eye-witness of the tragical transactions.

The gentleman informed us that last winter, he and about forty others from one of the Western States, started for this country across the plains. But after traveling a few hundred miles, the weather became so intensely cold, that they concluded to stop until its severity should abate. Their encampment

was in the neighborhood of a large number of Indians and a few white settlers. They killed an abundance of game, and traded some with the Indians, who for some time were very peaceable.

But after a few weeks, several cases of sickness appeared among the red men about the same time, when, from some cause or other, the settlers made them believe their new neighbors had poisoned them, as was afterwards supposed. This cruel conduct so enraged the savages, that shortly after, a large body of them at midnight rushed upon the encampment of their supposed foes, with the ferocity of tigers. So suddenly and furiously was the attack made, that before the members of the company could rally themselves, nearly one half of their number lay weltering in their blood. At length however, by a well directed fire from their arms, which they always kept loaded, they succeeded in repulsing the Indians, who left several dead upon the field.

Shortly after the dawn of day had appeared, as decently as circumstances would permit, with heavy hearts they buried their dead. But soon their feelings of grief gave place to those of revenge, and they deliberately entered into a 'solemn engagement,' as they called it, to shoot down every Indian they should meet with, until their return to the States. Lest a more numerous body of the enemy should again attack them, a little past sunrise they broke up their encampment, passed on their journey, and strange to tell, the rash vindictive vow upon them seemed to solace their hearts.

They however found no opportunity to carry their horrid engagement into effect until they reached this country, nor did their revengeful feelings lose any of their ardor on the way, for soon after their arrival, one of the company shot dead upon the spot an innocent little Indian girl as she sat upon a log. Previous to this, the red man had given the whites no serious trouble; but this wanton barbarous act perpetrated upon the innocent, for the sins of those living more than one thousand miles distant, was what first stimulated the California Indians to make war upon the miners.

While the singular individual who was a large raw-boned

young man, was dwelling upon the scenes through which he and his companions had passed, and the vow they had made. His voice trembled, and his cheeks were moistened with tears. But his tears were those of disappointed revenge, rather than of grief, for he thirsted for the red man's blood. There was a bold, undaunted and lofty firmness in his gestures, and in the tones of his untutored, wild enunciations, that made those around him tremble. Indeed, in his whole demeanor there was an awful sublimity, if we may be allowed the expression. Some one behind him ventured to say in a low voice, to another gentleman :

"The whites are more to blame than the Indians, for they were the first aggressors."

"Who dares take sides with the vagabond Indians, who spilt the blood of my friends? I'll fight him. I'll fight a dozen of the wretches who dare do it—they are my enemies, and the enemies of my murdered friends too, whose blood cries still from the ground for vengeance—where is the man?" said he, in a loud gruff voice, at the same time turning quickly round, clenching his large fists, and drawing himself up in a fearless posture, while tears of rage stood in his eye, which startled all present.

Myself and friend, concluding something more than a draw-battle was soon to come off, withdrew and passed on our way. Just as the sun was sinking below the western hills, we reached Auburn. The countenance of the tall backwoodsman, indeed his entire image, still haunts my vision.

Scenery of Auburn and vicinity.—Wild Animals.—The climate of Auburn and vicinity is very salubrious, and its scenery is not devoid of interest. The surface of this portion of the new country is exceedingly undulating, being covered with many little hills and dales, all of which are richly dressed in verdure. Through the sloping ravines swiftly flows a small meandering stream of water of dirty appearance, made so by the miners, who on either side from morn till night, may be seen busily washing the shining ore. The region is but sparsely covered with wood, but the trees are very thrifty, es-

pecially the pine, which generally grows very straight and to an astonishing height.

The country is filled with wild animals. As we pass from place to place, they often start from the fastnesses and thickets and bound swiftly from us. Three days since, when about half a mile from the village, the writer came upon quite a large coyote which suddenly dashed from him as fast as its legs could carry it—this animal seems to be a species of the dog and the wolf, and is generally about the same size.

Yesterday morning about sunrise, two of my friends started on a gunning excursion. Little more than two hours afterwards they returned, bringing with them a large deer which they had killed, strung upon a pole and borne upon their shoulders; they found the load quite enough for their strength, as they had shot it about three miles from our encampment—it weighed when dressed, about one hundred and twenty pounds. The venison, which we had the pleasure of testing at the breakfast table this morning, was delicious.

There is also here an abundance of birds, the warbling of which almost constantly greet our ears. But the woodpecker which is somewhat larger than those of New England is the most numerous, and its industry deserves a passing notice.

By the wonderful promptings of instinct, these birds gather and store away in the fall, large supplies of acorns, which serve for their food during the winter and spring. Their store-houses are the trunks of the large pine trees, in which they peck holes just large enough to exactly fit the acorn, which they invariably introduce first the end from which springs the germ or sprout; no mechanic could possibly make a more perfect fit. The entire trunk, from twenty-five to thirty feet of the lower part of each tree, is thus covered with the nuts, usually placed about six inches apart. In this manner, astonishing quantities of the article are stored and preserved safely, upon which the curious birds feed during the winter and spring, besides a large number of lazy, thievish squirrels.

The Grave.—Near the northern suburbs of Auburn, is a grave, and the only one we have seen since our arrival. To what part of the States the deceased belonged, or where are

now her relatives, we have not been able to learn, though we have made frequent inquiries concerning the matter. The following monumental inscription, written coarsely, but plainly, upon a rude pine slab placed at the head of the grave, is all that seems to be known to the passers-by, in regard to the history of the slumbering remains : —

HARRIET FOSTER,

DIED, FEB. 9, 1850,

Aged 15 years.

The hallowed spot is situated on ground somewhat elevated, over which are spread, and most thriftily growing, many large trees, the broad-spreading branches of which are thickly covered with beautiful foliage. The head of the grave is near an Indian trail or foot-path, which has long been traveled by the red man of the forest. Over the winding path, day after day has the writer passed to and from the place of his labor, and as often as he has looked upon that grave and reflected upon the precious relics it contains, his heart has throbbed with pensive emotions.

And what can be connected with the grave of a stranger to thus interest and affect the heart? At home, the head-stone and mounded earth rarely fails to attract the thoughtful attention of the passing stranger. But as we look upon *this* sacred spot, a cloud of thrilling circumstances, unknown at home, connected with it, unbidden force themselves upon the mind, and swell the bosom with mingled emotions. The departed youth, whoever she was, as well as her parents, must have passed through many trying scenes before reaching this place, and afterwards, ere she entered the spirit-land.

No doubt the long period the writer has been shut out, especially from the pale of female and juvenile society, without which the world would verily be but a gloomy wilderness, renders his susceptibilities in the present case more easily impressed with sympathy and tenderness, than they would have been otherwise. Since leaving home, we have seen scarcely any women or children, and in this village there are none of the latter, and only two of the former; hence the fact that the departed one was a youthful female, occasions no small part of the interest we feel in the case.

Stingtown, May 16th. *Departure from Auburn.*—Having labored in the Auburn “diggings” nearly a month, with inconsiderable success, and learning from various sources, that throughout the mining districts generally the valuable metal was found in quantities bearing little proximity to what had been anticipated, we concluded to abandon the mines and to turn our attention to some other branch of business. Accordingly on the ninth instant, we broke up our camp, and left that place for Sacramento City, where we arrived on the next afternoon.

Before reaching that place, however, upon reflection we had concluded that the step we had taken was quite premature, as we had journeyed a great distance at a great sacrifice, on a mining expedition, and that the trial we had made was insufficient to qualify us to render a satisfactory report upon the mining prospects of the country, on our return to the States. Therefore we decided to make another and more thorough trial, and selected this village as the most favorable for operations.

After tarrying at Sacramento two days, in company with many others, we took passage on board the steamer *Linda*, which brought us to Marysville, a distance of about seventy miles.

As we passed up the Sacramento river, we saw many things that interested us. The water was high, and in some places overflowed the banks. Occasionally, we passed a cluster of Indian huts or wigwams, before which the dirty inmates stood gazing at us, all the younger of whom, were in a state of entire nudity. Now and then a deer would start from beneath the bushes and scamper swiftly away. We saw a large number of ducks seated upon the water near the banks, and also many flocks of wild geese, briskly flying high over our heads. But the passengers were most interested in the wild horses and cattle, several large droves of which we saw grazing upon the beautiful grass that thickly covered the valley. The *Linda* left Sacramento about the middle of the afternoon, and ran during the night. It stopped several times at the villages for passengers, wood and water. The river is deep, with almost perpendicular banks, consequently the boat could pass along

close to the shore, which most of the way is lined with trees and bushes that overhang the water.

Midnight Scene.—On one occasion, when the boat stopped, it ran into the bushes, and such a crackling noise as it made is not often heard. It took place at midnight, while no doubt, many of the passengers were dreaming of distant homes, and suddenly aroused all on board—all on that side of the boat which had come in contact with the snapping limbs, half-awake, half-asleep, instantly sprang from their berths and precipitately made for the cabin door, the bed clothes flying in every direction.

At this time the writer was lying upon the floor, which place he preferred to a berth, it being very warm, and came near being trampled to pieces by his frightened companions. He happened however to be awake, and knew what was going on—in a twinkling the spirit of merriment entered him, when he set up a laughing, that made about as much noise as the boat had done among the snapping branches. The retreating ones at length ascertained that they were safe and sound, and soon after entered their berths again. The occasion was honored by no "grizzlies," though we noticed a plenty of *white bares*, of the biped species, as they were hurrying past us towards the door. The boat experienced no damage by the accident, except tearing away one of the chimney braces which was soon repaired.

On the following morning, a little past sunrise, we reached Marysville, a considerable village, situated on the Yuba river, about thirty-five miles above its confluence with the Sacramento. After engaging teams to transport our baggage, about twenty of us left that place and pursued our journey together.

Wild Animals--- Mistaking an Umbrella for a Grizzly Bear.—The weather was fine, and we had a pleasant time as we passed further and further back amid the wilds of this new country. The road, with the exception of a few sloughs, was very good and much trodden. Most of this portion of the country is very fertile, being covered with very heavy grass, and the climate is delightful.

Here too we witnessed many wild animals; the coyote, an-

telope, elk, deer, &c., would occasionally start up and bound from us. Our teamsters informed us that grizzly bears were very common in this region, but that they scarcely ever harmed any person, unless provoked to do so. We felt afraid however of meeting some of them, and each carried well loaded arms, so as to "give 'em some," as juveniles sometimes say, if any should attempt to molest us.

During the first day after leaving Marysville, we traveled about fifteen miles, and at night encamped under the broad-spreading branches of a very large tree, where we soon made fires and cooked our suppers. We had hardly finished our meal, ere a coyote, on seeing our fires and hearing our voices, as was supposed, commenced barking, the sound of which very much resembled the barking of a young dog; it was only a few rods from us.

Soon after supper, we spread our blankets upon the ground and laid down for the night. The company, though much wearied, were in good spirits, and full of glee; but soon, after "letting off" a few jokes concerning their sleeping accommodations, compared with a nice house and bed at our homes, climbing trees if attacked by grizzlies, &c., most of them fell asleep. The writer however, must confess that his imaginative thoughts were occupied too much with the gruff-looking jaws and claws of old Bruin, to allow him to remain long upon the ground, so about ten o'clock he mounted one of the wagons and stretched himself upon its top. But the barking of the coyote was still heard occasionally, which together with the fear of being visited before morning by the dreaded enemy, prevented him from falling asleep. The night was quite dark, and he could not refrain from raising up his head at short intervals, and glancing his eyes round to ascertain the position of things.

Little before eleven, when all was hushed in stillness except the occasional yelping of the coyote, to my surprise and consternation I saw, as I supposed, a large bear, or some other ferocious beast, slowly approach two of our companions, who seemingly were fast asleep, about twenty feet from me. The sight made me shudder,—it quickly sent my blood rippling

back to my heart from my fingers' ends ; what to do I did not know. My rifle was well loaded, it is true, but was where I could not get it without being discovered by the terrible beast. I soon however, determined to hail the companion lying nearest to me, so in a whisper I called out, "Wheeler! Wheeler!" but did not rouse him. I called again in a louder whisper,— "Wheeler! Wheeler! I say, as true as you live there's a large bear on your right!"

This roused him, when he looked that way, and with much agitation quickly exclaimed,—

"Oh, my thunder! there's a monstrous bear sure enough! keep still till I can get my gun."

He crawled out of his bed as slyly as possible, crept along until he reached the end of the wagon, when he hastily seized his rifle, and examined it to see if it was in order. But while putting himself in motion to fire,—

"Ha! ha! ha! shoot my umbrella and I'll send that coyote after you!" lustily shouted one of the young men whom Wheeler and myself had supposed in danger of being torn in pieces by the dreadful beast.

The young wag had so artfully arranged his umbrella back of his head, that he could draw it slowly up, and then dodge it back again, that he deceived us. By his dexterous maneuvering, its motion appeared just as we should suppose would a bear, when cautiously approaching us while asleep. Wheeler and myself acknowledged ourselves completely outwitted by the joke.

Crossing a Plain—Horned Toad—Indians.—On the next day, we crossed a plain about fifteen miles in width. It was nearly surrounded by mountains, and was a dreary place.—The rays of the scorching sun fell upon it with such intense-ness, that the entire surface with the exception of a few trees, had the appearance of having been burned over. As we reached a brook near the edge, our teamsters informed us that we should find no more water until we should arrive on the opposite side ; consequently each of the company filled his canteen or kettle, with the indispensable article. The writer made and filled his kettle with gruel, which has been his principal drink

since his arrival in the country, with which he often regaled himself while walking over the parched ground. We reached the opposite side much exhausted little before one o'clock and can say truly, we never suffered more severely from the heat than on that occasion. I had exhausted my gruel, and my companions had drank all their water ere we passed two-thirds of the distance, and never have we felt more grateful for a draught of water than when we came to a sparkling brook on the opposite side.

During the same afternoon, we caught and examined what is called a *horned toad* which is quite a curiosity. It is about the size of a large mouse—it has legs, and runs like a mouse. But the shape of the head, eyes, and mouth resemble those of the toad. Its head and part of the body is covered with a bony substance, resembling little stubs or protuberances of horns, especially those upon the head, which very much resemble the first appearance of horns on other horned animals.

While passing up and down the mountains, we occasionally met a few Indians, and two nights since were obliged to encamp in the neighborhood of several of them. We learned from the teamsters, that in this region of the country, the red man is very peaceable, except that he will steal everything that comes in his way. The writer after lying down, in spite of his weariness and consequent need of rest, could not help thinking of his red neighbors and spent rather a restless night.

Yesterday, far up among the mountains we saw five more of these roving creatures, who were gathering herbs, roots and acorns which they use for food. As we came up to them we stopped a short time; some of our party gave them a small quantity of bread which they devoured quite eagerly. By signs they made us understand that they were one family comprising a son, father and mother, a grandfather and grandmother. The women were very shy, but the men and boy soon became quite familiar with us. The old grandfather was naked, not having on a rag of clothing. The females, except from the waist to the knees also exposed their tawny tough looking skin. The boy and his father had on each nearly an entire suit of clothes.

Some one of our company gave the old man a shirt which he much pleased, quickly put on; but in his haste got it on with the sleeves downwards. This caused all red and white to laugh merrily. The old fellow however soon saw his mistake, rectified it and joined in the giggle as heartily as any present.

When we first stopped, the old man sprang upon a large rock a short distance from us, with the nimbleness of youth, where he sat gazing at us, with his feet drawn up, his arms being folded upon his knees. The aged son of the forest looked more like a baboon than a human being. Shortly after, the old fellow came down from the rock and stood straight as a lamp-post near us, when as the reader may well suppose, his appearance came near frightening some of us.

During yesterday we traveled about twenty miles and encamped last night on the top of a considerable mountain, eight miles from this village. This morning at an early hour, we commenced our descent down the mountain, which in some places is very steep, so steep that it seemed impossible for a team to pass down in safety. But our teamsters had been down the difficult way before, so they chained together their wheels so they could only slide, and down they started. On several occasions, the company assisted them by holding back with ropes, and once while winding slowly down, all were obliged to hold on to the upper side of each wagon with all their might, to prevent the load from being upset and dashed team and all many feet below. At length we arrived at the bottom in safety, and with cheerful hearts entered this place about one o'clock.

Stingtown is situated at the foot of one of the Sierra Nevada mountains, on the south fork of Feather river, about one hundred and twenty-five miles north-east of Sacramento City. It is on a very salubrious spot, between mountains having several openings, through which a fine current of pure air is constantly circulating.

August 14th. *Turning the River.*—Soon after our arrival at this place, the writer, with fifteen others, formed themselves into a company for the purpose of turning one portion of the river, that we might obtain the shining ore from its bed, where

it was supposed to be deposited in greater abundance than elsewhere. The task before us was no small undertaking, for the river contained a large volume of water, being in width, from thirty to forty feet, and in depth, at this season of the year when it is the lowest, from two to seven feet, and was to be turned, and carried through a channel or trench, about seven hundred feet in length.

We however commenced the work in good earnest, and in process of time succeeded in constructing a raceway or channel of sufficient dimensions to receive the water, and thus to drain the river. Owing to a ledge of rocks at one point of the work we were obliged to build an extensive flume across the river, which received the water from the race, and conveyed it to the opposite side. The flume was constructed at great expense of labor being about two hundred feet in length and of sufficient dimensions to receive the entire river. The bottom was made of plank, five inches in thickness, and ninety feet in length, which we hewed from large pine trees we had cut down.

Thus have we labored and toiled for nearly three months, prompted and cheered by the hope of realizing something for our trouble. But I am sorry to inform the reader we have toiled to no purpose. Our fond anticipations have been sadly disappointed,—the bottom of the river has been examined, and the valued treasure is not there. This is a hard case, for most of us have spent nearly all of our money, and the disappointment came when each expected to obtain sufficient, not only to replenish his own pocket, but also to make a remittance to the States.

The writer, when he commenced here, had in his pocket about one hundred dollars; now he has not a dime, but is in debt over and above his means to pay, thirteen dollars. Well, this is rather an unpleasant fix to be in, so far from home, among strangers, and far up among the Sierra Nevada mountains, surrounded by savage Indians, and wild beasts into the bargain.

But the failure of our "claim" as it is called, is not a solitary instance; most of those on this branch of Feather river within

twenty miles on either side of us, have of late been worked and failed in a similar manner. Yesterday afternoon a friend and myself rambled a few miles up the river, and mingled freely with the miners, who generally could sympathise with us, as most of them had met with disappointments similar to our own.

Since laboring in this place, we have experienced and witnessed a full share of the usual variety attendant upon a miner's life. We have cooked and ate our meals in the open air, and have slept in a rudely constructed tent on a hard bed, while our intellectual, social, moral and religious enjoyments, have been exceedingly limited. But though thus shut out almost entirely from the pale of society, subjected to so many deprivations, we have been surrounded by many scenes calculated to interest and cheer the heart, as well as excite the mind. Scarcely a day has passed but something exciting and novel in its character has transpired in our neighborhood.

Fight with a Rattlesnake—also with a Scorpion—. We have frequently engaged in snake and scorpion fights, and have often come off victors of the battle field. On different occasions we have killed three large rattlesnakes within a few feet of our tents. The last combat occurred a few mornings since, when the writer was present and participated in it. At an early hour we saw the venomous reptile run under a large flat rock, whereupon five of us armed ourselves, four with poles, and the fifth with a well loaded carbine or short gun, surrounded the stone and began to punch him out. Soon finding the ends of our poles coming in on either side rather roughly, he appeared near the edge and took an attitude that clearly indicated that he had determined to make something more than a draw-battle of the matter.

As it was the first of the kind the writer had ever seen alive, with no ordinary interest, he minutely marked his movements. The dreaded enemy placed about eight inches of his tail in a sloping posture, swiftly shook its rattles a minute or two, producing a sound very much resembling the singing of a locust, which signal the animal always gives of its fatal designs, and then coiled itself into a springing posture. As we thus beheld

it with its glossy head elevated a few inches above the coils, stretched a little forward, looking steadily, determinately at and occasionally darting its tongue in fury towards us, waiting for a fit opportunity to make its deadly onset, the sight almost made us shudder—each started quickly back and took good care to keep at a proper distance from the enraged foe.

At length by a well directed discharge of the carbine, his snakeship was stretched lifeless upon the ground. We soon pulled him out and found it measured little more than three feet in length, and had ten rattles. During the fight all was bustle and excitement; as we hauled him out, a wag said:

“Poor fellow! instead of pitching into us, he got pitched into; his spunk and life was knocked out of him so suddenly, I don’t believe he winked after the gun went off.”

We examined particularly its teeth and rattles, and were much interested in their formation. It has but two teeth of any consequence, one in each jaw; the upper which is curved, sharp and the longest, is that through which the dangerous reptile ejects the poisonous fluid when it bites, or rather *strikes*. Its rattles grow in joints, forming about five inches of the tail, being solid, of irregular shape and of the size and hardness of small snail-shells—the friction of the joints produces the noise when it “rattles,” as it is called.

Yesterday, while seated in a neighboring tent with a friend, very suddenly we were drawn into a fight with a scorpion.—The battle though of short duration, was quite spirited. The venomous animal made an attack upon my friend as he was looking over some clothing in which it had been concealed, and stung him severely on the hand, which caused him to groan quickly out in agony, “Oh! oh! my conscience!” By the steady application of his lips however, he soon sucked out the poison, and fortunately in a few hours felt considerably relieved. As the poisonous reptile drew out its sting, the blood instantly spurted several feet. Our friend said the shock was unlike anything he had ever experienced, that the sensations were indescribably painful.

As soon as the scorpion had inflicted the wound, it hastily retreated, but was shortly after captured by the writer. The

singular animal is very nimble, about two inches in length, and in some measure resembles the crab; its sting though dangerous, is not quite so fatal as the bite of a rattlesnake.

✓ *Battle between two Tribes of Indians.*—During two or three days past, it has been currently reported that a battle will be fought to-morrow, of a graver character than those named above. It is to take place about seven miles from this village, between two tribes of Indians, to settle a difficulty that has existed sometime between them. The place for the contest has been agreed upon and staked off by the parties; it is in a ravine through which flows a stream of beautiful water, on either side of which, on the sloping grounds, the combatants are to take their stand.

The mode of warfare, practiced among the tribes of these wilds is wholly unlike that adopted by civilized nations. The bow and arrow is the only weapon used, which they handle with surprising dexterity. Instead of summoning to the conflict all their able bodied men, each tribe selects twelve of its best warriors, who alone can enter the field, and engage in the bloody strife, while their respective people remain as spectators at a proper distance, often cheering on their archers with yells and the war-whoop, as the battle goes on.

As may well be supposed on this occasion, the hearts of all concerned will swell with painful anxiety and suspense, until the contest shall have been decided, for the strangest feature of all in their mode of warfare, is found in their treatment of the vanquished—the victorious tribe bears off as booty, all the female portion of the conquered one, that it may at length become extinct, as whatever may be the disagreement among our readers in regard to the capability and usefulness of the female sex, all no doubt will readily agree with us, that it would be an impossibility to perpetuate the existence of society to any great length of time, without their assistance.

Hanging a Gambler—Intense Excitement—Resisting Officers.—The state of morals and refinement at Stingtown, is probably as elevated as it would be in most of the States, in the absence of female society. The influence of gamblers which in many parts of the country is the greatest pest with which the

miners have to contend, has made but little progress here, though attempts have been made several times to introduce it. The miners, though ordinarily very peaceable and orderly, are determined almost to a man, that no gaming house shall be opened in the place, as they generally well understand the character of most who follow that nefarious business. Hence, as often as a gambler arrives and attempts to "keep a table," as it is called, he is sure to find out very soon, that the villagers do not welcome his company; he is waited upon and informed that he must leave the place. The miners were influenced to take this high and independent stand at first, by an occurrence that took place a few weeks since, when one of their number lost his life at the hands of one of these blacklegs. The facts are these :

A gambler from a town about ten miles distant came to the place and stopped at a store in the south part of the village.— After having been there a short time, he seated himself at a table, displayed his "bank," as it is called, and invited those present to bet with him. Soon the invitation was accepted by two miners, who took their seats opposite him, when the play commenced. A few spectators gathered around, and for a short time the game progressed peaceably.

Soon however, the tone and manner of the gambler attracted the particular attention of the by-standers, all of whom began to feel he was a desperate fellow. By this time, the two individuals playing with him, from his unfairness had concluded that he was a cheat and swindler and refused to continue the play, at the same time hinting the above reasons for so doing, whereupon the hardened villain became offended, drew his revolver, and shot one of them dead on the spot.

The horrid deed so exasperated those present, and others drawn thither by the report of the pistol, that under the direction of the storekeeper and two others, they instantly seized the wretch, tied his hands behind him and in one half hour from the time he had perpetrated the tragical act, he was suspended by the neck from the limb of a tree, only a few feet from the store. The miserable man plead hard for his life, saying he was in a passion, or he should not have fired his revolver, but to no purpose. The alarm spread rapidly through the village

and a large number of the miners had collected ere the body of the wretched man was taken down—we need not say the scene was one of intense excitement. But the affair did not end here. On the next morning, it was currently reported among the miners, that the sheriff of the county, who was a particular friend of the deceased gambler, belonged to the same town and was also a gambler himself, had made preparations to arrest the storekeeper and the two others who had been foremost in the execution, and to try them for riot and murder. It was furthermore reported, that the sheriff's posse was to consist of twenty persons, officers and others, whom he had summoned to his aid, every one of whom were gamblers, and that the arrests were to be made on that afternoon. Whether the sheriff designed to keep his doings in secrecy, we have not learned, but presume he did, but by some means or other publicity was given to his plans.

The miners very generally sanctioned the part their comrades had acted, and were determined they should not be harmed on that account. Accordingly, little past noon, about four hundred of them all well armed with bowie knives, revolvers, carbines and rifles, assembled at the store of their friend. After arranging a plan to be pursued should their interference be necessary, they retired leaving one of their number with a tin horn with which to sound the alarm, and concealed themselves behind the hills and among the bushes, at a little distance from the store.

The resolute company listened sometime in anxious suspense, expecting each moment to hear the signal of alarm, while the individual left to give it and the storekeeper were as anxiously watching the road along which the sheriff and his posse were expected to come. But hour after hour passed and no officers appeared; all began to think that in regard to the arrests, they had been misinformed. Little before six however, the reports of the previous day were confirmed; the sheriff and his aids were seen in the distance through the trees approaching, each seated upon a mule that was advancing in a moderate trot.

As soon as their approach was discovered, the storekeeper stepped behind his desk, and his companion concealing his

trumpet about his person, took a seat in the back part of the shop near an open window that looked towards the ambushed throng, each with a fluttering heart as may well be supposed. At length the company of officers reached the store, when all quickly dismounted and tied their mules to the branches of fallen trees. Each was thoroughly armed and appeared to feel as if the authority with which he was invested, sufficiently guaranteed success.

Soon the sheriff accompanied by ten others entered the store and, stepping up to the proprietor, said :

“Are you the owner of this store ?

“I am sir,” he answered in a quiet tone.

“You are my prisoner,” rejoined the officer, at the same time placing his hand upon his shoulder.

The sheriff's last word had been hardly uttered, ere the young man in the back part of the shop stuck one end of his tin horn out of the window, and being greatly excited hardly knowing how much noise he made, blew three heavy blasts causing such a clattering of the instrument, as to well nigh stun all present.

When the alarm was given, the ambushed party having become wearied by the long delay, were either sitting or lying upon the ground ; but as the sound burst upon their ears, each sprang upon his feet as if by electric shock, snatched up his arms and precipitately rushed from the place of his concealment towards the scene of encounter. In a moment the store was completely encircled by the formidable force, each holding his musket in an advancing position, to the no small consternation of the sheriff and his aids, who by this time were all standing in front of the store. In another moment three short heavy blasts of the trumpet announced that the time for action had arrived, whereupon the committee, ten in number, promptly stepped into the ring in front of the officers—it was a terrible moment—not a voice nor movement of any kind was heard—terror was depicted in the countenances of the surrounded prisoners, each of whom resembled a marble statue about as much as a living being.

Soon the foreman of the committee in a firm distinct tone, thus addressed the first officer :

"Mr. Sheriff, yesterday on yonder limb, we hung a vile murderer; we did so as an act of justice to an outraged community—you and your party are his friends, of the same character and therefore deserve the same fate. A plenty of hemp is at our service, and there are a plenty of limbs yonder, and in a few minutes we shall rid the world of twenty more just such miserable miscreants unless you forthwith leave this place; we give you five minutes to consider upon the matter."

To these laconic remarks the sheriff though evidently quaking from head to foot with fear, attempted a sort of humorous reply; he quickly said to his companions:

"It is getting rather hot here, I guess it would be best to leave."

As he said this the ring opened right and left and they hastily passed to their mules, mounted them, and swiftly left the village amid the deafening groans and jeers of the victorious ones, and have not since been heard from.

Lassoing a Gambler.—In the early part of last week, a stranger arrived in the place and commenced fitting up quite a large tent, in which he informed the neighbors he intended to open a store. But the miners thought they discerned in his appearance the mementoes of a blackleg, and therefore kept a vigilant eye upon him. In a short time their apprehensions were realized, for on the second day instead of offering goods for sale, the stranger placed in his tent a table and some benches, and before night had displayed upon the table his 'bank' of about one hundred dollars, and began to invite those standing round, who had been drawn thither from motives of curiosity to play with him.

It was soon noised abroad that the veritable "old fellow" had again appeared among us sure enough, and the self-constituted vigilance committee being apprized of the fact promptly repaired to the spot, when the leader at once entered the tent, stepped up to the gambler and said:

"Friend, the inhabitants of this village are a very sober, industrious, peaceable people, and do not wish to have any trouble: but they despise all those of your profession, and if you place any value upon your safety, I advise you to leave this place."

The gambler much excited, drew his revolver and replied :—

“Who dares disturb me! I should like to see the attempt made—I’ll stay where and do what I please! this is a free country—I can protect myself!”

The other moderately but distinctly answered,

“We shall be sorry to be obliged to harm any one, but if you do not leave immediately, somebody will be hung here in fifteen minutes.”

The last word of this reply had been scarcely pronounced, when another of the committee standing in the door, suddenly sprang a lasso round the neck of the gambler, when he and five others previously agreed upon, instantly twitched him headlong out of the door, his pistol dropping as he fell, and hurriedly commenced dragging him down the road. The poor fellow, as quick as possible, seized the rope with both hands and convulsively held it, to prevent the slip-noose from choking him or the fatal cord from breaking his neck, consequently could not favor himself any more than that, though every moment in danger of being dashed against the rocks, the road being quite rough.

As he was hauled jerking along, the writer is glad to say the large crowd which had collected and followed, did not exhibit any demonstrations of merriment, but were very quiet.

After the prisoner had been thus dragged a few rods the leader cried,

“Stop boys! stop boys! don’t kill him—give him a chance yet to escape!” when they stopped. The gambler, badly bruised and covered with blood and dirt, got up, staggered to the conductor, seized him by the arm and in a tremulous voice exclaimed :

“Save me! save me! oh, do save me! what shall I do—I’ll never come here again.

The leader answered, at the same time taking the rope from his neck,

“Run for your life, and I’ll do what I can to prevent you from receiving any further harm; whereupon he quickly started, hatless, and covered with blood and dirt, and the way he made his heels fly over the uneven ground, indicated that

though badly bruised he had not received any very serious injury. Soon he was out of sight, and most of us were truly glad that he got off as well as he did—whether he slept quietly during that night, we have not learned. His money and other effects were distributed among some poor sickly persons in the neighborhood.

Wonderful Instinct of the Wood Duck—The writer though not a naturalist, has often been interested since roaming amid the wilds of this country, in the instinct of animals. But never has he seen a more wonderful exhibition of its power than he witnessed a short time since.

Some weeks ago, a pair of wood ducks made their appearance among us, and for a short time were often seen upon the wing, passing up and down the river together in front of our tents. They evidently had been newly mated and like other newly married bipeds were in search of a place in which to build their nest. But in a few days we missed one of the loving pair, and the other as it flew back and forth from place to place, seemed very lonely. The case was the topic of conversation among the miners in the neighborhood—all however, began to mistrust what was going on; suffice it to say, the nest of eggs on which the female was sitting, was discovered high in a large tree that stood upon the elevated banks.

In process of time the ducklings were hatched as we learned by often seeing their dam flying hurriedly towards her nest, with their food in her mouth. At length the time for the duck to introduce her offspring to the water, their genial element, arrived when she performed the feat in a manner that filled with wonder and admiration all who beheld it.

When first seen, after she had taken her final leave of the nest, she with her brood was directly over the centre of the river, in height about fifty feet; her wings were broad-spread, while her little ones, six in number, three on either side, tightly grasped with their tiny bills, feathers near her back, by which they hung. During their journey downwards, the ducklings tried their little wings, making them fly merrily. In this manner the duck slowly, steadily descended with her precious charge, to the water—we need not say the wonderful exhibition afforded us a fine treat in natural history.

We could refer to a great variety of other scenes, in which we have participated, or witnessed, during the four months we have spent in the mines; but having already extended our narrative beyond what we had intended, we must take leave of the subject. From what has been said, the gentle reader can form some idea of *life in the mines*.

Marysville, August 15th. *Final departure from the mines—a mishap.*—Yesterday, the writer decided to take a final leave of the mines, and to engage in some other branch of business. Accordingly, little before noon, he tied up his blankets, slung them upon his shoulder and in company with five others left Stoughton on foot for this village. We traveled about fifteen miles during the afternoon, and last night as usual when traveling, encamped under some trees. Though not disturbed by grizzly bears or any other wild beasts, we did not pass the night without accident.

At an early hour, after partaking of a light supper consisting of bread and cheese, my companions spread upon the ground their blankets, upon which they stretched themselves for the night. The writer placed his in his hammock, which he strung up midway between two trees about three feet and a half from the ground, and into which he tumbled anticipating a night of comfortable rest—the last rays of twilight had nearly disappeared, when he retired to his swinging bed.

The evening was beautiful, as much so as any I have seen since roaming abroad. The fragrant air and the fanning of the gentle breeze, were delightfully refreshing. Not a cloud floated in the atmosphere above. A multitude of bright luminaries in splendor bespangled the heavens, and seemed to twinkle smilingly through the branches of trees upon me. The lovely queen of night had taken on her first quarter, and was in majesty wheeling her nocturnal circuit along the azure sky. Though refreshing sleep would have been a cordial both to my physical and mental energies, yet for sometime I was almost instinctively filled with wonder and admiration as I reflected upon the stupendous scene above and around me.

At length however, not a little wearied, the writer sank into a partial slumber. But shortly afterwards, as he began to turn

over, while half-sleep half-wake, his head-rope suddenly parted and down he went, head first upon the ground, leaving his heels of course pointing towards the stars. His head struck the ground with a force that nearly stunned him——

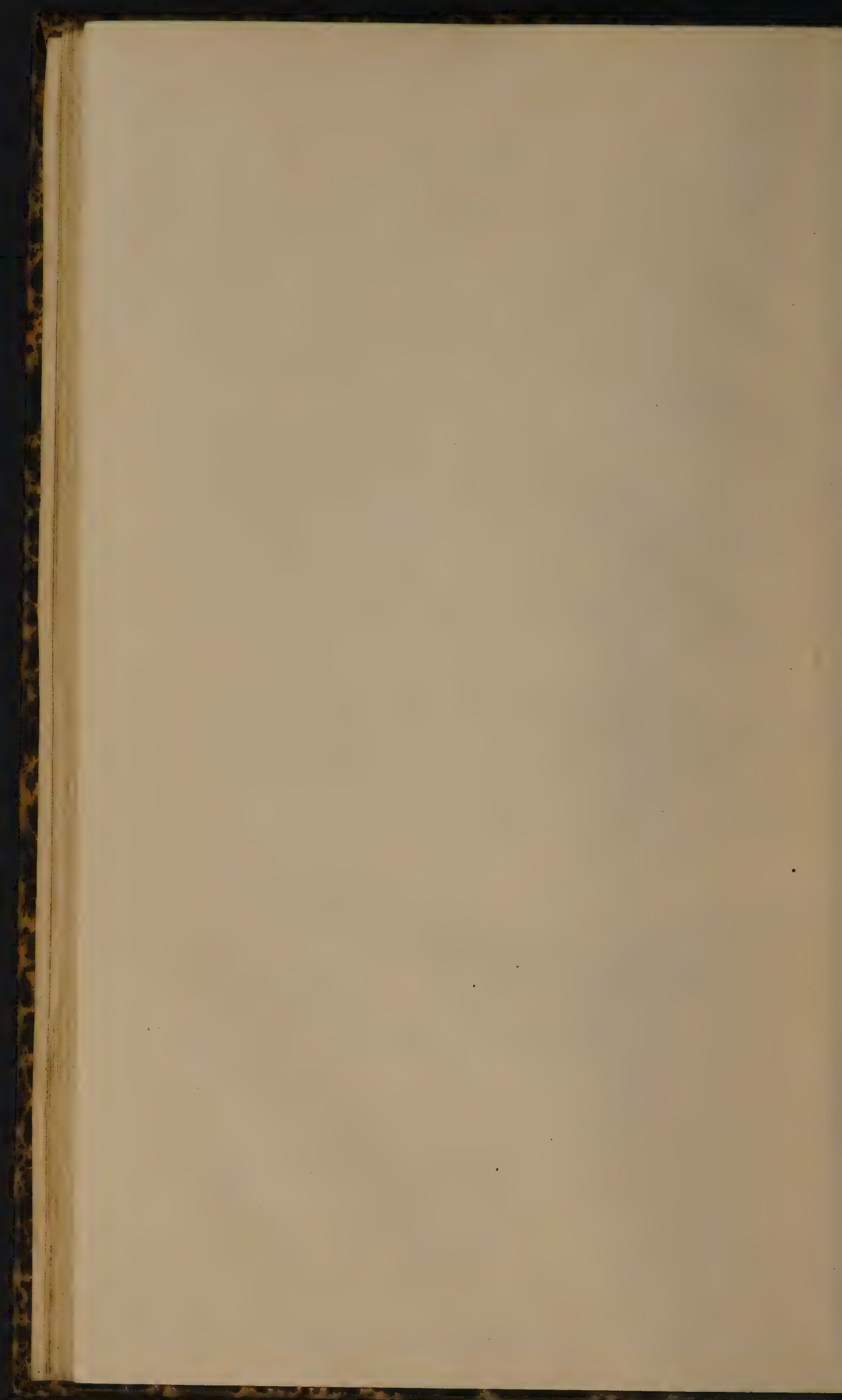
He thought at first old Bru'n at last
Had surely caught and held him fast.

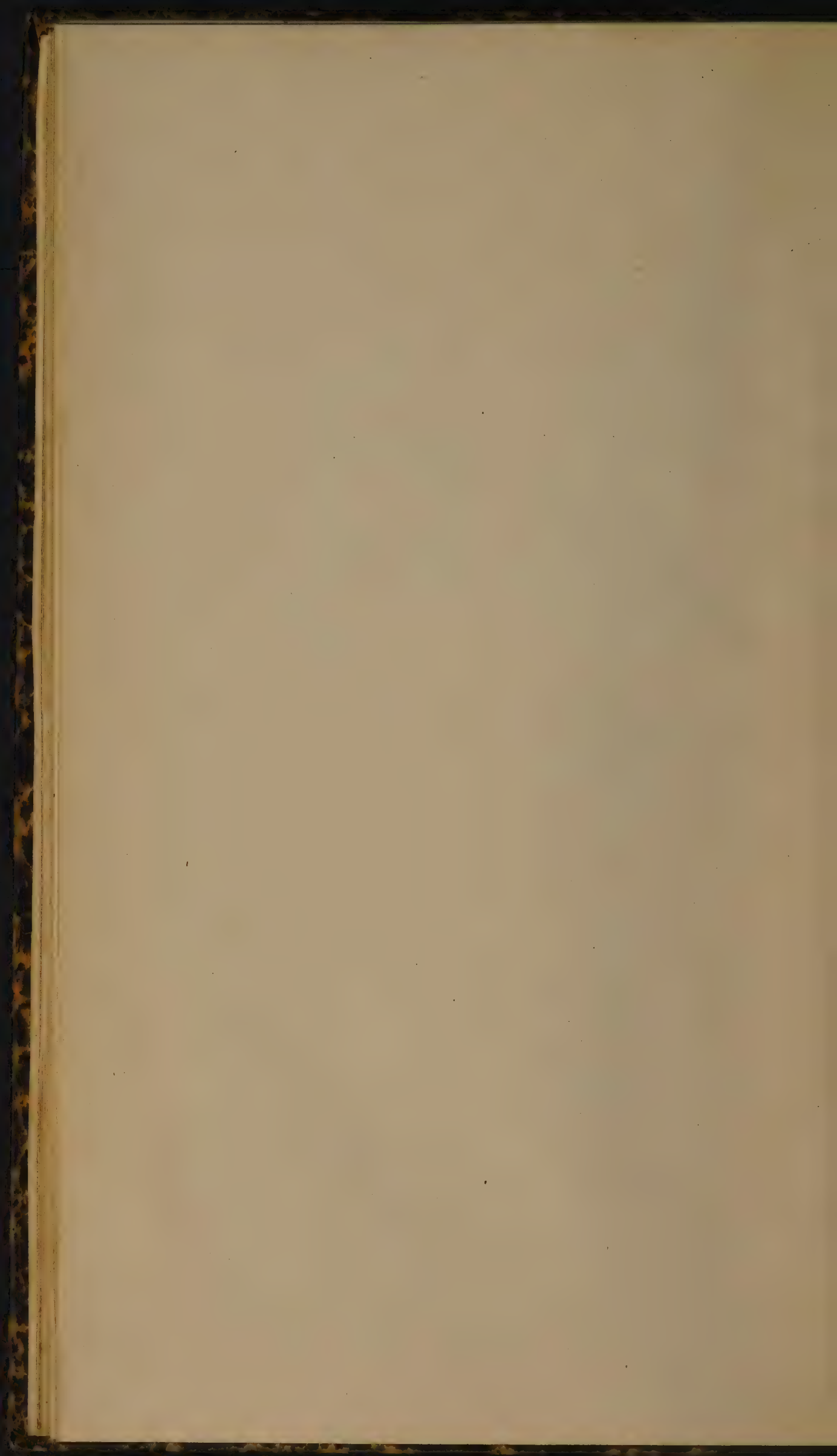
Soon however, his jostled brain became calm again, when he ascertained the occasion of his misfortune, and shortly after spread his blankets upon the ground, on which he spent the remainder of the night.

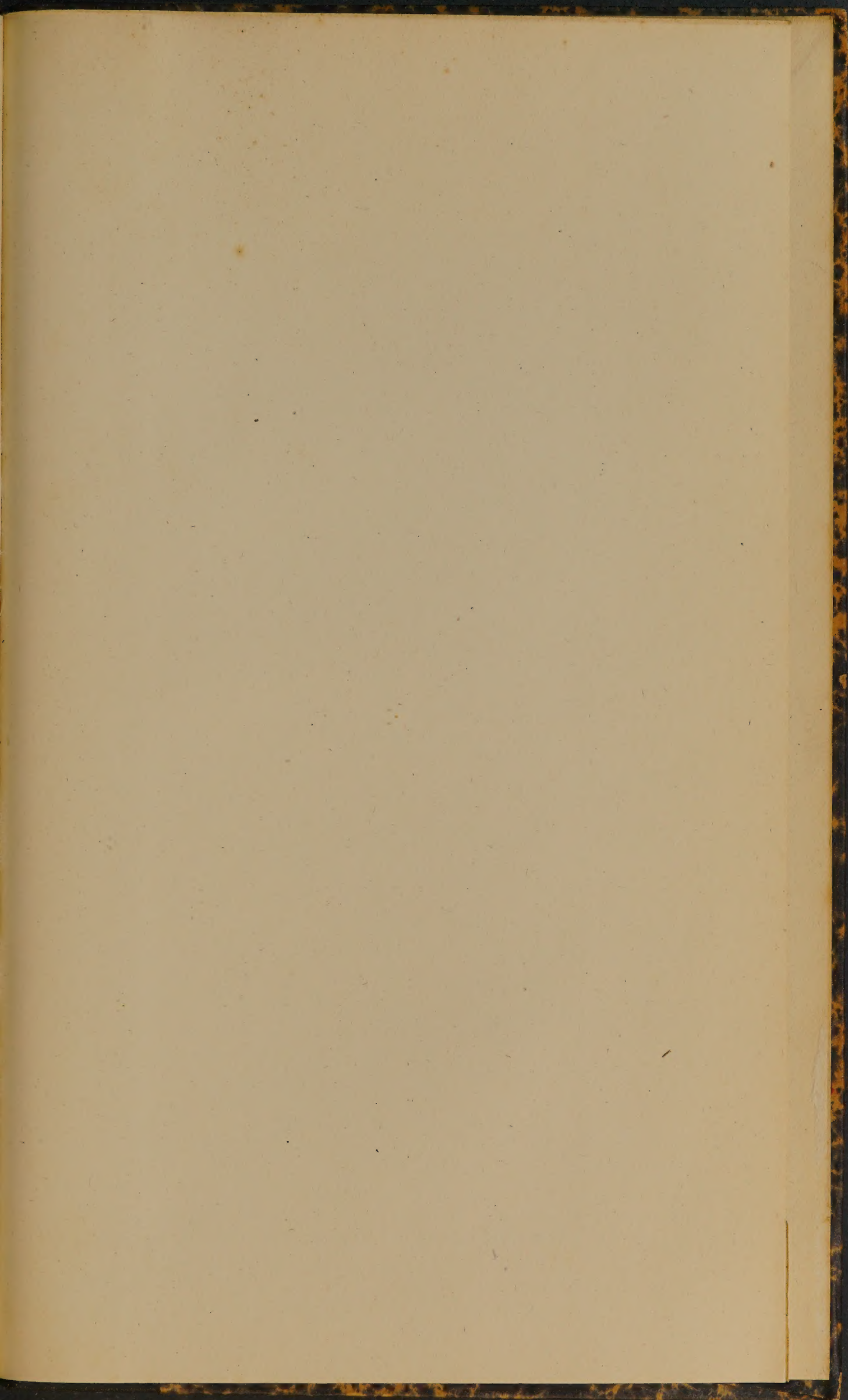
Early this morning, myself and friends obtained seats in a wagon drawn by four sprightly horses, and reached this village little before sun-set.

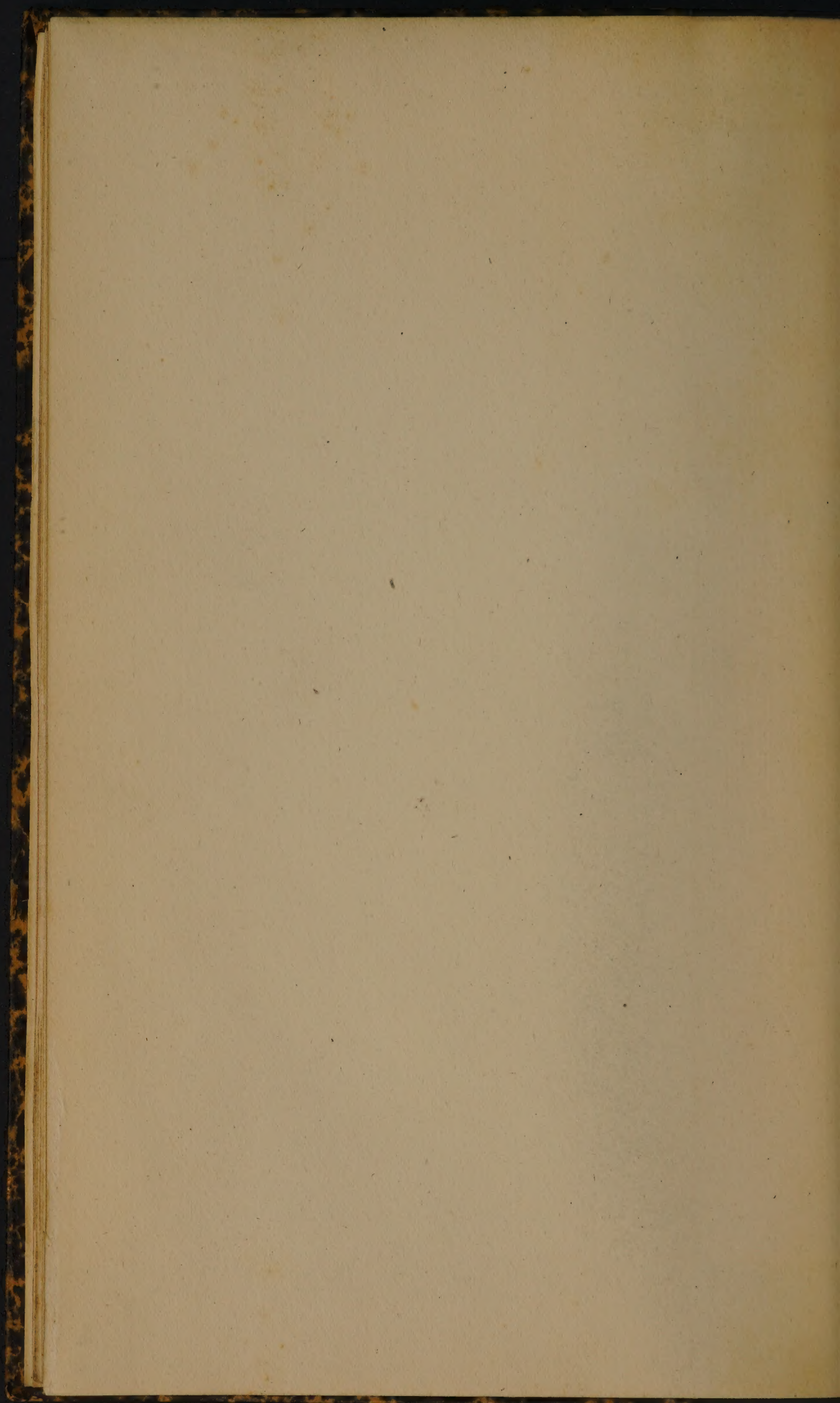
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